

Comment

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Event Name	Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part One - Publication
Comment by	Professor Basil Crowley
Comment ID	LPPub509
Response Date	16/12/14 19:21
Consultation Point	Core Policy 13: The Oxford Green Belt (View)
Status	Submitted
Submission Type	Web
Version	0.2
Q1 Do you consider the Local Plan is Legally Compliant?	No
Q2 Do you consider the Local Plan is Sound (positively prepared, effective and Justified)	No
If your comment(s) relate to a specific site within a core policy please select this from the drop down list.	N/A

Q4 Please give details of why you consider the Local Plan is not legally compliant or is unsound or fails to comply with the duty to co-operate. Please be as precise as possible. If you wish to support the legal compliance or soundness of the Local Plan or its compliance with the duty to co-operate, please also use this box to set out your comments.

The Green Belt Reviews carried out by the Vale of White Horse District Council (the Council) do not meet the requirements of Core Policy 2.

In particular, the Core Policy clearly states that any such review would be a full strategic review of the whole of the Oxford Green Belt in cooperation with other Oxfordshire Authorities, and that this issue was one that the Council could not consider in isolation. This is inconsistent with the Council having carried out its own reviews, reviews that moreover seem to have been carried out with the sole purpose of identifying and releasing sites meeting the criteria for housing development under part 1 of the Draft Local Plan. If such a process were to be lawful, it would allow a local authority unilaterally to carry out

such a review whenever new housing needs are identified. The primary function of the Green Belt, to prevent urban sprawl, would thereby be sacrificed, and rural businesses on the edge of the Green Belt would suffer as a result of the inevitable speculation. The Green Belt would not survive..

Core Policy 2 also states that any review of the Green Belt would be 'in accordance with national policy and national guidance'. Yet the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) makes it clear that a Green Belt boundary should only be altered in 'exceptional circumstances' and government guidance issued on 6th March 2014 states that 'Unmet housing need is unlikely to outweigh the harm to the green belt and other harm to constitute the 'very exceptional circumstances' justifying inappropriate development on a site within the Green Belt'.

If the Council were to choose not to follow this guidance, it would be in conflict with its own Core Policy, which would make such a choice legally non-compliant.

There is no evidence of any Environmental Assessments having been carried out in respect of any of the listed sites.

Q5 Please set out what modification(s) you consider necessary to make the Local Plan legally compliant or sound, having regard to the test you have identified above where this relates to soundness. (NB Please note that any non-compliance with the duty to co-operate is incapable of modification at examination). You will need to say why this modification will make the Local Plan legally compliant or sound. It will be helpful if you are able to put forward your suggested revised wording of any policy or text. Please be as precise as possible.

The Green Belt reviews carried out by the Council should be declared illegal or legally non-compliant and all sites for development within the pre-existing Green Belt should be struck from the plan.

Please note your representation should cover succinctly all the information, evidence and supporting information necessary to support/justify the representation and the suggested modification, as there will not normally be a subsequent opportunity to make further representations based on the original representation at publication stage.

After this stage, further submissions will be only at the request of the Inspector, based on the matters and issues he/she identifies for examination.

Q6 If your representation is seeking a modification, do you consider it necessary to participate at the oral part of the examination? No - I do not wish to participate at the oral examination